

SITES FOR COURT HOUSES AND POST OFFICES.

MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

COMMUNICATING

A report of the Secretary of the Interior and Postmaster General, respecting sites for court houses and post offices in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston.

JANUARY 25, 1855.—Referred to a Select Committee, and ordered to be printed.

To the Senate and House of Representatives :

I transmit herewith a report of the Secretary of the Interior and the Postmaster General, together with accompanying documents, communicating what has been done in execution of the act of Congress of August 2, 1854, entitled "an act to provide for the accommodation of the courts of the United States in the district of Massachusetts, and in the cities of New York and Philadelphia."

I have deemed it best, under the circumstances, not to enter into any contracts for the purchase of sites, but to submit all proposals made in response to public advertisement for several weeks in the principal newspapers in each of the cities designated, to Congress, for such action as it may deem proper to take in fulfilment of the original design of the before-mentioned act.

FRANKLIN PIERCE.

WASHINGTON, *January 24, 1855.*

WASHINGTON, *December 19, 1854.*

SIR: On the 2d of August last, Congress passed an act to provide accommodations for the United States courts at Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, the second section of which is as follows :

"SEC. *And be it further enacted,* That the President be authorized to cause to be procured, by purchase or otherwise, suitable sites for buildings to be used as courthouses and post offices in the cities of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia; and that he prepare and submit to Congress, at as early a day as practicable, plans and estimates for the same, together with any contract or contracts he may make for any such site or sites, which contract or contracts shall be conditional and made subject to the approval of Congress."

With a view to the execution of this act, you deemed it proper to

invite proposals of sites, which was accordingly done, by public advertisement, for some weeks, in the principal newspapers in each of those cities; and we have now the honor to lay before you the accompanying schedules of the offers received, showing by whom made, where situated, the superficial extent and price of each.

We also submit a map or plan of each city, on which the sites are indicated by numbers corresponding with the numbers of the proposals.

After the receipt of these proposals, you thought it advisable that we should visit those cities, and, in conjunction with the postmasters and the marshals and other officers of the courts, personally inspect the premises in order to a more satisfactory ascertainment of their suitability for the purposes intended, and the real value of the property offered.

We therefore proceeded to Philadelphia, New York, and Boston and viewed each of the proposed locations, with reference to the convenience of the public as well as the interest of the government.

These jointly demand that the post-offices as well as the United States courts should be located near to, though not necessarily in, the midst of the business portions of the cities, near the centre of population, and at points easy of access, and with an eye to any future changes which may be made in these respects. These requisites would necessarily restrict the selections of sites to those portions of the cities most highly improved; and it was anticipated, therefore, that the cost of the same, in the three principal cities of the Union, would be very considerable; but it was found to be so great that we are induced to recommend that no contracts be entered into for the purchase of sites, but that the results which have been obtained be submitted to Congress for such appropriations as it may, in its wisdom, see proper to make in fulfilment of its original designs.

It is suggested that the interests of the United States may be best consulted by the appropriation of such specific sum for the purchase of a suitable lot, and the erection of appropriate buildings thereon, in each of the cities in question as Congress may deem reasonable and proper, with a proviso that the cost of the lot and buildings shall in no case exceed the amount of the appropriation for that purpose.

It is also recommended that the buildings be erected under the supervision of a competent architect or superintendent, and that they be of brick and fire-proof, plainly and substantially finished, great regard being had, in all respects, to their durability and utility.

The construction of public buildings at other and minor points for those and like purposes has been repeatedly authorized by Congress, and the necessity for them in these great cities is still more apparent.

The present accommodations for the United States courts are unsuitable and insufficient; and, although the rents are very large and constantly increasing, it is not possible to procure, on lease, such buildings as the public interests require.

The great inconveniences attending the post office in Philadelphia have long been a cause of serious complaint, the rooms now occupied being too small and entirely unsuited for the large and increasing business done at that office.

In New York the building used for a post office is, in many respects, wholly unfitted for the purpose; and in Boston, where there is also a very large distribution, the rooms now occupied as the post office are quite too small, besides being so badly lighted as to require the use of gas in the day time.

We have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servants,

ROBERT McCLELLAND,
Secretary of the Interior.
 JAMES CAMPBELL,
Postmaster General.

To the PRESIDENT.

Schedule of proposals for a site for a court-house and post office in the city of Philadelphia.

No. 1. By Charles J. Ashmead: Lot on Fifth street, between Spruce and Walnut streets, 68 by 190 feet, containing about 13,000 square feet, for.....	\$65,000 00
No. 2. By N. Le Brun: Lot, between Fourth and Fifth streets, 105 feet on Walnut street, and 244 feet on Library street, 25,620 square feet, for	25,000 00
No. 3. By Pierce Butler: Northwest corner of Chesnut and Eighth streets, 174 feet on Chesnut street, 173 feet 4 inches on Eighth street, and 174 feet on Grape street, containing 30,160 square feet, for	286,000 00
No. 4. By Lewis Bremer and D. E. Breinig, executive committee of German church southeast corner Fourth and Cherry streets, front on Fourth street 194 feet, Cherry street 96 feet, thence south 46 feet 3 inches, east 6 feet, south 26 feet 9 inches, west 3 feet, south 121 feet—19,147½ square feet, for	150,000 00
No. 5. By Henry G. Freeman: Walnut Street Theatre, northeast corner Walnut and Ninth streets, 96 feet 6 inches on Walnut street and 140 feet on Ninth street, containing about 13,510 square feet, for \$7 77 per foot, or.....	104,972 70
Also, a lot adjoining the above, on the east, 25 feet on Walnut street, 143 feet 6 inches, containing 3,587 square feet, for \$7 31 per foot, or.....	26,220 97
No. 6. By John Rice, for Joseph Swift and others: Lot northwest corner Chesnut and Sixth streets, 156 feet 3 inches on Chesnut street and 150 feet on Sixth street, containing 23,437 square feet, for \$11 52 per foot, (see substitute for this at the end,) or.....	269,994 24
No. 7. By C. Macalester: Lot southeast corner Sixth and Walnut streets, 123 feet on Walnut street and 156 feet on Sixth street, containing 21,668 square feet, for	200,000 00
No. 8. By C. Macalester: Lot southeast corner Sixth and Walnut streets, 123 feet on Walnut street and 116 feet on Sixth street, containing 18,056 square feet, for	165,000 00

No. 9. By C. Mitchell: Lot southwest corner Fourth and Chesnut streets, 111 feet on Chesnut street and 151 feet on Fourth street, containing 16,300 square feet, for.....	\$450,000 00
No. 10. By Bank of Pennsylvania: Lot fronting 82 feet on Second street and 295 feet on Lodge street, containing 21,371 square feet, for.....	250,000 00
No. 11. By J. B. Mitchell: Lot 25 feet, on Chesnut street, between Eighth and Ninth streets, depth 178 feet, containing about 4,450 square feet, for.....	75,000 00
No. 12. By Lloyd W. Bickley: Lot south side Walnut street, corner, 191 feet west, Fourth street, 78 feet on Walnut street, and running back 148 feet, about 11,554 square feet, (three large three-story brick houses on this lot,) for.....	98,159 50
No. 13. By D. F. Gordon: Lot northwest corner Fifth and Prune streets, 125 feet on Fifth street and about 132 feet on Prune street, containing 16,500 square feet. Price not stated.	
No. 14. By J. M. Scott: Lot at the southeast corner of Chestnut and Ninth streets, 23 feet on Chestnut and 146 feet on Ninth street, containing about 3,358 square feet, for.....	50,000 00
No. 15. By Alfred M. Herkness: Lot southeast corner of George and Ninth streets, 88 feet on Ninth and 91½ feet on George street, containing about 8,052 square feet, for.....	91,621 00
No. 16. By N. Le Brun: Block, bounded by Chestnut street, Library street, and Fourth and Fifth streets.	
Plan No. 1, 19,972 square feet.....	\$220,000 00
Plan No. 2, 25,366 square feet.....	317,000 00
Plan No. 3, 29,706 square feet.....	326,766 00
Plan No. 4, 37,712 square feet.....	433,688 00
Plan No. 5, 17,982 square feet.....	189,710 10
No. 17. By Samuel J. Randall: Lot 174 feet on Washington square and 126 feet on Walnut street, 21,924 square feet, for.....	207,180 80
No. 18. By Samuel J. Randall: Offers, if the government desires, from 25 to 50 feet on Chestnut street, in addition to that described in proposal No. 17, and on the same terms.	
No. 19. By William Deal, R. C. Mitchell, and O. W. Leslie: Lot on west side of Fourth street and north side of Library street, adjoining the custom house property on the east, 10,814 square feet, for.....	197,000 00
No. 20. By N. Le Brun: Block bounded by Walnut, Library, and Fourth and Fifth streets.	
Lot No. 1, 20,590 square feet, for.....	240,913 00
Lot No. 2, 25,366 square feet, for.....	292,216 32
Lot No. 3, 29,706 square feet, for.....	326,766 00
Lot No. 4, 38,712 square feet, for.....	433,574 40

Lot No. 5, 17,982 square feet, for.....	\$189,710 10
Lot No. 6, 12,124 square feet, for.....	Not stated.
No. 21. By W. L. Scaffer: Lot northwest corner of Second and Lodge streets, 42 feet on Second street and 200 feet on Lodge street, 8,200 square feet, for..	110,000 00
No. 22. By George N. Barber: Lot SE. corner of Fifth and Chesnut streets, including all the property between the custom-house and Fifth street, and between Chestnut and Library streets. Neither contents nor price stated.	
No. 23. Isaac B. Parker: Lot 147 feet on south side of Chesnut street, between S. Eighth and S. Ninth streets, and extending back 146 feet 10 inches; about 21,550 square feet, for	220,504 25
Also, a lot 68 feet on S. Ninth street and 237 feet on George street, about 16,116 square feet, for.....	118,500 94
No. 24. By N. Le Brun: Lot on SE. corner of Locust and Juniper streets, 125 feet on Locust and 200 feet on Juniper street; 25,000 square feet, for	100,000 00
Also, the lot on SW. corner of Locust and Thirteenth streets, 125 feet on Locust and 200 feet on Thirteenth streets; 25,000 square feet, for	150,000 00
Or will sell the whole of the above two lots for	250,000 00

Reserving all the mantel-pieces of foreign marbles, together with the hot-houses, green-houses, and exotic plants. The main building is 102 feet on Locust street; the offices extend the entire distance back on Thirteenth street to Howard street; the coach-houses, stables, and other buildings, extend on Howard street about 125 feet. The remainder of the square is inclosed by a substantial stone wall. The dwelling and all the offices, with coach-houses and stables, are covered with a metallic roof, and are fire-proof. There are several fire-proof safes built in the walls. All the walls in and about the place are of immense thickness, which, if not required by the government, I will take, and make a deduction of *five thousand dollars* from the price.

No. 25. By Robert Patterson: offers precisely the same premises offered by N. Le Brun in No. 24, and upon the same terms and conditions throughout.

Substitute for No. 6.—By John Rice, for Swift and others: If the corner lot, 24 feet by 80 feet, is deducted, the amount of bid will be reduced \$60,000. If the western lot, known as the Bolivar House, 38 by 75 feet, is deducted, a still further deduction can be made of \$35,000.

Schedule of proposals for a site for a court house and post office in the city of New York.

No. 1. By Isaac Young, treasurer of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church: The building and grounds now occupied by the post office,

bounded by 184 feet 8 inches on Nassau street, 101 feet 8 inches on Cedar street, 115 feet 9 inches on Liberty street, and by about 174 feet on the northeasterly side, containing about 20,250 square feet, for	\$520,000 00
No. 2. By Martin E. Thompson: Property known as the Clinton Hotel, having a front of 50 feet on Beekman street, with a depth of 104 feet, containing 5,200 square feet, for	150,000 00
No. 3. By N. Hill Fowler: A lot having 186 feet 1 inch on Nassau street, 144 feet 8 inches on Beekman street, 199 feet 1 inch on Park Row, and 59 feet 10 inches on street, containing about 26,609 $\frac{1}{2}$ square feet, for	399,135 00
No. 4. By Baker & Weeks and Martin E. Thompson: Lot 151 feet deep, extending through from Chambers to Reade streets, having a front on each of 125 feet, containing about 18,875 square feet, for	400,150 00
No. 5. By James B. Glentworth: A lot fronting 90 feet on Broadway and 124 feet 2 inches on Reade street, containing about 23,000 square feet, for	550,000 00
No. 6. By Porter McCarty and Thomas S. Gibbs: Gothic Hall, formerly Masonic Hall, on lot on boundary between Pearl and Duane streets, fronts 50 feet on Broadway, depth 125 feet, rear breadth, 125 feet, in all 7,500 square feet; offers to rent for \$1 60 per square foot per annum.	
No. 7. By Chauncey Bernard: Lot on Broadway, between Anthony and Leonard streets, containing 16,000 square feet, for	200,000 00
No. 8. Also, a lot extending from Anthony to Leonard street, midway between Broadway and Church street, containing 19,700 square feet, for	225,000 00
No. 9. By Mortimer Livingston: Lot fronting 200 feet on Church street, 100 feet on Anthony street, and 100 feet on Leonard street—20,000 square feet, for	160,000 00
No. 10. By Asher Kurshual: Lot 194 feet deep, extending from Lispenard to Walker street, with a front of 256 feet on each, containing about 50,000 square feet, for	500,000 00
No. 11. By J. B. Glentworth: Lot fronting 50 feet on Broadway and 150 feet on White street, about 7,500 square feet, for	300,000 00
No. 12. By J. B. Glentworth: Lot fronting 199 feet 6 inches on Broadway, depth 150 feet, bounded by Bond street on one side and Great Jones' street on the other, about 30,000 square feet, for	450,000 00
No. 13. By J. B. Glentworth: Lot fronting about 180 feet on Fourteenth street, 206 feet on University Place, 203 feet on Thirteenth street, containing about 40,000 square feet, for	550,000 00
No. 14. By J. B. Glentworth: Lot fronting 202 feet 9 inches on Broadway, 313 feet 2 inches on Twenty-	

third street, and 301 feet 4 inches on Twenty-fourth street, about 63,000 square feet, for	\$425,000 00
No. 15. By Rugsley & Raynor and Fowler & Franklyn, agents: Lot 208 feet on Broadway, 197 feet 6 inches on Sixth avenue, 169 feet on Thirty-first street, and 92 feet on Thirty-second street, about 26,000 square feet, for	220,000 00

Schedule of proposals for a site for a court-house and post office in the city of Boston.

No. 1. By the city of Boston: The granite court-house in Court square, on Court street, near the head of State street, 14,450 square feet, for	\$450,000 00
No. 2. By Charles McIntyre: For court-house alone, Massachusetts block, being part of an estate, bounded by Washington street, Court square, and Williams' court, 7,604 square feet, for	150,000 00
Or the whole estate, from Washington street to Court square, being 69 feet on Washington street, (9 feet being incumbered,) 269 feet on Williams' court, 60 feet on Court square, (part of the estate being on lease for two years,) containing 14,189 square feet, for....	333,441 00
No. 3. By Selden Crockett: The Bromfield House estate, 10,070 square feet, for	95,665 00
No. 4. By Joseph Coolidge: An estate 96 feet 7 inches on Bowdoin square, 98 feet 6 inches on the rear, 216 feet 8 inches on the northwest, and 202 feet 6 inches on the southeast boundary, 20,301 square feet, for...	101,505 00
Also, an adjoining lot, 1,611 square feet, for	11,817 67
No. 5. By Liberty Square Warehouse Company: Their estate bounded by Milk street, Batterymarch street, Liberty square, and Kilby street, containing 17,271 square feet, for	240,000 00
No. 6. By William Foster Otis: His wharf-lot and floats, at the end of D, on C, street, at the extremity of Mt. Vernon street, about 40,000 square feet, for	12,000 00
No. 7. By George W. Lyman: A lot at the corner of Summer and Hawley streets, 27,000 square feet, for	189,000 00

